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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SECOND MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 9 December 1993, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ARAUJO CASTRO (Brazil)

- Opening of the session
- Adoption of the agenda
- Election of the Chairman and other officers
- Review of the draft resolutions adopted by the First Committee at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly relating to the Disarmament Commission
- Draft provisional agenda for the 1994 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission
- Organizational matters
- Programme of work

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93-87339 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: I declare open the 1993 organizational session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

As in past years, the Commission is convened today to deal with organizational matters, including the election of the Chairman and other officers for 1994, the appointment of the chairmen of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, and decisions on the draft provisional agenda for the next substantive session.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (A/CN.10/L.33)

The CHAIRMAN: If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the agenda for this organizational session, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.33.

The agenda was adopted.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND OTHER OFFICERS

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the established principle of rotation for the chairmanship of the Commission, the candidacy for the chairmanship for 1994 is to come from the Group of African States. In that connection, I have been contacted by the Chairman of the African Group, who informed me that the bureau of his group had identified and recommended candidates for the chairmanship and for the vice-chairmanship allocated to the Group of African States. Those candidates, however, are still subject to endorsement by the full African Group, which will meet tomorrow.

For the information of members, let me announce that the Group of Western European and Other States has informed me that it has endorsed the candidacies of Austria and Sweden for vice-chairmanships of the Disarmament Commission for 1994, and that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States has communicated to me its endorsement of the candidacy of Cuba for a

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vice-chairmanship and of Mr. José Manuel Ovalle of Chile as Rapporteur.

The Group of Asian States and the Group of Eastern European States have indicated that they are still in the process of considering candidates for the vice-chairmanships corresponding to those two groups and that they hope very soon to be in a position to communicate those nominations to me.

For those reasons, I think we must contemplate the need for an additional meeting in this organizational session to elect the Chairman and other officers of the Commission for 1994; I propose it be held next Tuesday, 14 December, at 10 a.m. I kindly invite all regional groups to be in a position by then to communicate to me their decisions in connection with their candidates for Commission offices.

May I take it that members agree that the Commission should meet again on 14 December 1993 at 10 a.m.?

It was so decided.

REVIEW OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE FIRST COMMITTEE AT THE FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY RELATING TO THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

The CHAIRMAN: As members of the Commission are aware, the First Committee has adopted three draft resolutions which have specific requests or recommendations in connection with the work of the Disarmament Commission. For the sake of clarity and for the benefit of members of the Commission, I shall refer briefly to those draft resolutions, which are expected to be formally adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 1993.

The first draft resolution is A/C.1/48/L.3/Rev.1, which was adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 73 (a), entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission". The draft resolution

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contains a number of considerations relating not only to the past work of the Disarmament Commission but also to guidelines for the future work of the Commission and to the Commission's substantive agenda. I shall refer to some of these aspects in more detail when we come to the next item on our agenda, relating to the draft provisional agenda for the 1994 substantive session.

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The second draft resolution is A/C.1/48/L.27/Rev.1, which was adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 71 (h), entitled "International arms transfers". Paragraph 4 of that draft resolution reads as follows:

> "Requests the Disarmament Commission, at its organizational session in 1993, to include the issue of international arms transfers, with particular reference to resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991, in the agenda of its substantive session in 1994 and to report on the issue to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session".
>
> (A/C.1/48/L.27/Rev.1, para. 4)

The third draft resolution that refers to the Disarmament Commission is A/C.1/48/L.30, which was adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 63, entitled "The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields". Paragraph 1 of that draft resolution reads as follows:

> "Calls upon the Disarmament Commission to conclude its work on agenda item 6" - on science and technology - "in 1994 and to submit as soon as possible specific recommendations on this matter to the General Assembly". (A/C.1/48/L.30, para. 1)

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE 1994 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

The CHAIRMAN: The draft provisional agenda for the 1994 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission is contained in document A/CN.10/1993/CRP.6. That document has been prepared in conformity with past practice. The first three items are routine and relate to the opening of the session, the adoption of the

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agenda and organization of work. The following three items are the substantive items for consideration at the 1994 session.

Items 4 and 5 of the draft provisional agenda are the items referred to in paragraph 11 of draft resolution A/C.1/48/L.3/Rev.1, which reads:

> "Recommends that the Disarmament Commission, at its 1993 organizational session, adopt the following items for consideration and conclusion at its 1994 substantive session:
>
> "(1) Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons;
>
> "(2) The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields". (A/C.1/48/L.3/Rev.1, para. 11)

Those items have been on the agenda for a number of years, and the Disarmament Commission intends to conclude its consideration of them at its 1994 session.

Item 6 of the draft provisional agenda is entitled "International arms transfers, with particular reference to resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991". In that connection, let me recall the text of paragraph 12 of draft resolution A/C.1/48/L.3/Rev.1, which reads as follows:

> "Recommends that the Disarmament Commission, at its 1993 organizational session, include in the agenda of its 1994 substantive session an item entitled "International arms transfers, with particular reference to resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991". (A/C.1/48/L.3/Rev.1, para. 12)

Let me also recall paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.1/48/L.27/Rev.1, by which the General Assembly would

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"Request the Disarmament Commission, at its organizational session in 1993, to include the issue of international arms transfers, with particular reference to resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991 in the agenda of its substantive session in 1994 and to report on the issue to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session". (A/C.1/48/L.27/Rev.1, para 4)

Item 7 of the draft provisional agenda is the usual item on the preparation of the report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, and the final item, as usual, is entitled "Other business".

Does any delegation wish to make a statement at this stage?

Mr. AKALOVSKI (United States of America): Mr. Chairman, you have just made reference to two draft resolutions, A/C.1/48/L.3/Rev.1 and A/C.1/48/L.27/Rev.1. Among other provisions, one recommends and the other requests the Disarmament Commission to include in its agenda what appears as item 6 of the draft provisional agenda for the 1994 substantive session. I am sure that all members of the Commission will recall that the United States abstained in the vote on both those draft resolutions because in our view they tended to prejudge what we felt should be the decision of this organizational session.

The United States still believes that, as you indicated, Sir, items 4 and 5 ought to be concluded next year, and that all efforts of the Disarmament Commission should be devoted to that end. You noted that they have been on the agenda for a number of years, especially item 4, on nuclear disarmament, which under various names has been on the agenda for many, many years.

(Mr. Akalovski, United States)

Both of those items require a lot of work and a lot of effort for them to be completed successfully. We wonder if it is really advisable to include another item in the agenda at this stage. Perhaps we should consider this aspect of the situation before coming to any definitive conclusions.

Mr. REY CORDOBA (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): Today we are laying the groundwork for the 1994 substantive session, to be held in April and May, and it pleases me that the work of the Commission is going so well. However, I should like to refer to the previous intervention.

(Mr. Rey Cordoba, Colombia)

The representative who just spoke wondered whether it was advisable to add an item to the agenda of the Disarmament Commission. I would reply that on this question the will of the international community was made abundantly clear last month when the First Committee adopted draft resolutions A/C.1/48/L.3/Rev.1 and L.27/Rev.1. An overwhelming majority voted in favour of including the new item, leaving no doubt that all the countries represented there wished such an item - and there is no great difference between the delegations in the First Committee and those here in the Disarmament Commission.

I would recall that there were no votes cast against the draft resolutions. The representative who just spoke noted correctly that his delegation had abstained. But I note that it did not vote against the decision.

There is no reason to think that delegations have changed their thinking on this, and the action of the Disarmament Commission should be consistent with the decisions of the First Committee. I believe the Commission should adopt the draft provisional agenda before it.

Mr. CHINOY (India): I wish simply to lend my support to the very relevant statement just made by the representative of Colombia. My delegation believes it extremely important and timely to include this item on the 1994 agenda of the Disarmament Commission.

Ms. MASON (Canada): Following on to the comments made by my colleague from the United States, Canada would certainly agree that it will indeed require very concentrated effort to complete items 4 and 5 successfully. Of course, complete them we must, but the hope is that we will be able to complete them successfully.

(Ms. Mason, Canada)

I might also say that if this is to happen, at least with respect to item 5 - and I suspect this is true of item 4 as well - we will need a lot of advance preparation. Some of that has already started in respect of the science and technology item, with the informal consultations I had the honour to chair on the margins of the First Committee. I take this opportunity to note that with respect to those consultations a revised "non-paper" will shortly be available; indeed I hope it will be distributed before the end of this meeting.

I agree with my colleague from the United States that we need to devote the primary effort to items 4 and 5, but we will be concluding those items one way or the other, hopefully successfully. That means that we will need new items to turn to, and it seems to me that the sooner we know where we are going and what those items are the better, and the sooner we begin preparatory work on the new items the better. I would hope we could indeed approve the draft provisional agenda with the new item included as item 6, but on the understanding - one which has been broadly shared before - that we would be able to give only preliminary consideration to the new item at the 1994 session to pave the way for more focused consideration during the second and third years.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Canada for her information concerning the ongoing work on the item on science and technology; I think it important that we are making substantive progress towards the conclusion of that item.

I share her understanding that our primary effort at the 1994 substantive session will be devoted to the conclusion of items 4 and 5, on the process of nuclear disarmament and on the role of

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science and technology, and that we would begin preliminary consideration of the item on international arms transfers on the understanding that beginning even an initial stage would be extremely helpful in the future work of the Commission.

I believe the elements noted in Ambassador Mason's statement could help us reach quick agreement on this point.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation agrees with the representative of Colombia: a majority of members of the First Committee were unequivocal in supporting the inclusion of an item on international arms transfers in the 1994 agenda of the Disarmament Commission, and I do not believe there was any opposition. This is an item that can only reinvigorate our agenda, and it should be included.

We also agree with Ambassador Mason of Canada, that the Commission should focus its attention on completing the two pending items. But as the Chairman rightly notes, this does not mean that the Commission should not also carry out a preliminary evaluation of the item on international arms transfers.

It would be helpful to decide on its inclusion soon, for this would give delegations time to prepare, which in turn would make it possible for the Commission to conclude its consideration of the item speedily.

Hence, we support the inclusion of item 6 and the adoption of the draft provisional agenda as proposed; it will help revitalize the Disarmament Commission as it looks to the future.

Mr. PONCE (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation too agrees with the representative of Colombia. The very legitimate concerns of the representative of the United States, which are widely shared, will be taken into account as we set about organizing our work for the 1994 session. It is, of

(Mr. Ponce, Ecuador)

course, understood that priority consideration must be given to the two items carried over from previous years, as noted by the representative of Canada, and that only preliminary consideration will be given to the new item.

We support the inclusion of the item on international arms transfers.

Mr. RIVERO (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Like the delegations of India, Mexico and Ecuador, my delegation supports the view put forward by the representative of Colombia, that it would be useful and appropriate to include the item on international arms transfers, which appears as item 6 in document A/CN.10/1993/CRP.6. We fully agree with your comments, Mr. Chairman, and with the view stated by the representative of Canada, that our main efforts should be aimed at completing work on items 4 and 5, and that preliminary consideration of the item on international arms transfers should take place in 1994.

Hence, my delegation considers that the Commission should adopt the draft provisional agenda.

Mr. AKALOVSKI (United States of America): My delegation is very grateful to the representative of Canada for having expressed basically the same concern the United States has, namely that the main effort of the Disarmament Commission next spring should be devoted to the completion - the successful completion, as stressed by Ambassador Mason - of items 4 and 5. You yourself, Mr. Chairman, seem also to share the same view. Other speakers appeared to be expressing the same concern, namely that the primary effort of the Disarmament Commission should be devoted to those two items.

Reference was made to a preliminary consideration of the proposed item 6 of the draft provisional agenda. It would be helpful to my delegation if that term could be elaborated upon: What do we mean by "preliminary"? How many meetings would this be? Once a week, or what?

I also heard comments to the effect that if we include this item in the agenda now, we will have more time to prepare ourselves for our work in the spring. That is probably true, but what kind

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of work do we have in mind? I do not know if you are in a position to do this, Mr. Chairman, but perhaps you could give us at least some general idea of what is meant by preliminary consideration.

In that connection, I recall that a few years ago the item regarding objective information on military matters was initially discussed in a preliminary fashion, and only two or three meetings took place. Perhaps that is what we have in mind now, but I would like to have confirmation of that.

The CHAIRMAN: The representative of the United States, in a constructive spirit, has expressed a legitimate concern for all delegations, which are very much dedicated to concluding the work on the items on nuclear disarmament and on science and technology this year. Members will recall that what has happened in the past when we have decided to allocate a greater number of meetings to certain items. For example, I recall very clearly that during the year in which we were concluding the item on objective information we had many more meetings on that item than on other items. Sometimes the Chairmen of the other Working Groups were a little concerned because they did not have sufficient time; there is always competition for meeting time.

I think this a question that we should work out when we deal with the general programme of work, which should fall under "Organizational matters", although we can also touch on it now.

Members have before them document A/CN.10/1994/CRP.1, which contains a draft general programme of work for the 1994 substantive session. At present, it is just a very general outline indicating the times and places of meetings of the Commission itself and of

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its subsidiary bodies; it does not identify which subsidiary bodies would be meeting when or, thus, how many more meetings would be devoted to items 4 and 5 than to other items.

It is my clear understanding that there will be more meetings on items 4 and 5 than on item 6, and that item 6 would be considered in a preliminary, first-year mode. The idea would be to begin to take stock of the item and to try to pave the way for future consideration of the item - as has been the practice in the Disarmament Commission when we begin considering new items. This will be particularly the case in 1994, when we are to conclude not one but two rather difficult items. I am very hopeful that the Commission will be able to conclude successfully both the item on nuclear disarmament and the item on science and technology.

Even taking into consideration only those two items, past practice has shown that it will be necessary to fine-tune the programme of work, practically week by week, depending on the level of progress in one Working Group or the other. There could be a scenario in which after two or three meetings we reach agreement on, say, science and technology. So we conclude the item, congratulate the Chairman of the Working Group and suddenly have a lot more time available. Bearing in mind the effort that has gone into preparing for the session, it is quite possible that some version of that scenario could occur.

We might, on the other hand, have a very different scenario in which it becomes very evident that more intense scheduling of meetings for, say, the working group on science and technology is necessary for it to complete its work, and in which delegations feel it would be very worth while to dedicate that extra time to ensure that we conclude the item at the 1994 session.

(The Chairman)

As the representative of the United States said, it would be difficult to make a precise forecast in terms of exact numbers. But as Chairman it is my clear understanding that there would be a smaller number of meetings for item 6, which would be in its first year of consideration. I hope that all delegations will be able to agree to that understanding.

Mr. AKALOVSKI (United States of America): I just want to say, Sir, that I appreciate your explanation, which certainly accords with our own view as to how the Disarmament Commission should proceed next spring. I understand your situation and that you cannot commit the Bureau of next year's session to anything in terms of the programme of work, but I hope that if we adopt the draft provisional agenda as proposed in document A/CN.10/1993/CRP.6 there will be a clear understanding that only a very few meetings will be devoted to the new item in the spring.

On that basis, my delegation would be prepared to accept the draft provisional agenda.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot, of course, act in the name of the 1994 officers, but collectively we are the Disarmament Commission, and whatever understanding we reach today will stay on the books: this is a formal meeting of the Disarmament Commission -I understand that it even has verbatim records, to which we can always refer back.

I think a general sense of agreement prevails; I do not see conflicting views on this, and I think the understandings expressed by the representatives of Canada and the United States and a number of other speakers give us a very clear picture, and will give the 1994 Bureau extremely clear guidance on how to go about the detailed, micro-management work of dotting the I's and crossing the T's on the general programme of work.

Further, I would recall that as we progress during a substantive session, rather than taking an unchangeable decision on scheduling on the first day, we normally conduct a weekly review of progress and a weekly decision on the programme for the week, which has proven to be a very constructive procedure. For instance, there are times when it is felt that certain groups need more formal meetings while others prefer to meet in a very informal drafting group; it is difficult to foresee these things so far in advance.

What is always important is that we have the full support of the Secretariat and assurances that enough facilities will be available for interpretation and translation, while at the same time bearing in mind the constant concern of delegations to avoid simultaneous meetings at which they would wish to be present. At this year's session we had some difficulties related to simultaneous meetings, but we ultimately overcame the problems and came to a good result, but there were times when many delegations experienced difficulties.

(The Chairman)

On that understanding, may I take it that the Disarmament Commission decides to adopt the draft provisional agenda for its 1994 substantive session as contained in document A/CN.10/1993/CRP.6?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank all delegations for the constructive manner in which they dealt with this question.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

The CHAIRMAN: This item relates to the establishment of subsidiary bodies and the appointment of the chairmen of those subsidiary bodies, as well as to the date, duration and programme of work of the 1994 substantive session.

It is my understanding that, having adopted the provisional agenda for 1994, the Commission will wish as in previous years to establish working groups to deal with each of its substantive items, items 4, 5 and 6. The Commission will also require a Committee of the Whole, which will deal with item 7, "Report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session", item 8, "Other business", and any other issues that may be referred to it.

Working Group I will deal with item 4, entitled "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons"; Working Group II will deal with item 5, entitled "The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields"; and Working Group III will deal with item 6, entitled "International arms transfers, with particular reference to resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991".

(The Chairman)

May I take it that the Commission agrees on the establishment of those subsidiary bodies?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: As we are not yet in a position formally to elect the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission for 1994, we should perhaps not appoint the Chairmen of the Working Groups, but I should like to provide some information on that subject.

With respect to Working Group I, there is agreement that Ambassador Victor H. Batiouk of Ukraine should continue to chair that Working Group, with a view to concluding work on item 4, on the process of nuclear disarmament, at the 1994 session.

I have indications from the Western European group that Ambassador Peggy Mason of Canada will be nominated as Chairman of Working Group II, on the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields.

We shall formally confirm those appointments at our next meeting, after we have elected the Commission officers for 1994. If, however, I may anticipate our decision, I want to say that the Commission will profit greatly by having those two distinguished diplomats carrying on the work they have been doing in their respective areas, and I am very heartened that Ambassador Batiouk and Ambassador Mason will be in a position to take on the chairmanships next year.

We have just decided to establish Working Group III, on "International arms transfers", with particular reference to resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991, so there are as yet no nominations for the chairmanship, and I have been informed of no preliminary considerations in that respect. In order to facilitate

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consultations leading to the identification of a Chairman for Working Group III, let me note that, since in 1994 the Chairman of the Commission is to come from the African Group, the Chairman of Working Group I from the Eastern European Group and the Chairman of Working Group II from the Group of Western European and Other States, it would appear to me that, in the spirit of equitable geographical distribution we have tried to follow in our nominations, the Chairman of Working Group III should be nominated either by the Latin American and Caribbean Group or by the Asian Group. I invite the Chairmen and members of those groups to consult with a view to identifying a candidate, if possible by the next meeting of the Commission.

(The Chairman)

Turning to the dates and duration of the 1994 substantive session, members are aware that the Conference on Disarmament will finish the first part of its 1994 session on 31 March 1994, and I understand that other conferences in this connection have been scheduled for early April 1994. It has been suggested that the Disarmament Commission, following past practice, may wish to schedule its 1994 substantive session from 18 April to 9 May 1994, which gives us three weeks plus one day, the same duration as the past few years.

May I take it that the Commission decides that its 1994 substantive session will be held in New York from 18 April to 9 May 1994?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Members have before them the draft general programme of work for the 1994 substantive session (A/CN.10/1994/CRP.1). As in the past, we would dedicate the first two days, morning and afternoon, to the opening of the session, the adoption of the agenda, organization of work and the general exchange of views. The subsidiary bodies would begin to meet on Wednesday, 20 April. Then, in conformity with past practice, the Commission would hold brief plenary meetings on the Monday of the second and third weeks to receive progress reports from the subsidiary bodies. Subsidiary bodies would meet on the Thursday and Friday of the third week, 5 and 6 May, to finalize their reports, with a view to holding a meeting of the Committee of the Whole on Monday, 9 May, to receive reports of the subsidiary bodies and the report of the Commission and to deal with any other issues, to be followed by a plenary meeting to introduce and adopt the reports of the subsidiary bodies and consider and adopt the report

(The Chairman)

of the Disarmament Commission. There is also provision for any concluding statements that delegations may wish to make.

This is a skeleton programme of work; as we progress, we will be filling in specific information on which subsidiary bodies will be meeting at what time, in line with the understandings we reached today in our discussion of the provisional agenda for the 1994 session.

Mr. AKALOVSKI (United States of America): This is not a new issue; we have discussed it on earlier occasions: is it really necessary for us to devote two days to a general exchange of views? I recall that in the past it was suggested that statements could perhaps be simply circulated in writing for delegations to peruse in their offices. This would allow more time for the Commission to do its substantive work in the subsidiary bodies. Given the workload we expect next year, and especially in view of the addition of a third substantive item, perhaps we could consider that suggestion again.

My delegation believes that delegations may be content to have their statements circulated in writing rather than reading them out in full, or to give very brief summaries, as Ambassador Mason did at this year's session of the First Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I would be very hesitant to take a formal decision on this subject; there are several possibilities. We should also recall that the very fact that, at least this year and last year, delegations expressed interest in participating in the general exchange of views and have made statements, and that those statements tended, as I said at the time, to be very much to the point and very useful for the substantive consideration of the items. Most of them were geared to specific problems pending in the consideration of the various items.

(The Chairman)

At the same time, I agree that we should try to provide as much time as possible for the subsidiary bodies. As one example that might be considered by next year's Bureau, it might be possible to place a time limit on statements, or to encourage delegations very strongly not to speak for more than a certain number of minutes, or further to encourage delegations to distribute written texts, either in the form of formal working papers, which we have always found to be extremely useful to the work of the Commission, or in the form of informal documents elaborating their positions for the information of other delegations. The more that delegations carefully set out their thoughts in writing for the use of other delegations, the more we will have elements that can facilitate agreement on all the points before us.

There are conflicting concerns; everyone wants more time for the subsidiary bodies, but at the same time a large number of delegations feel the need to make at least some sort of statement in plenary meeting. We can reconcile those two things, perhaps by some of the measures I have just outlined.

There are several ways in which we might work towards decreasing the number of meetings devoted to the general exchange of views, and I shall not fail to convey that to the person elected to chair the Commission in 1994.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): Unquestionably there will a great deal of work to do at next year's session of the Disarmament Commission, given the goal of completing two substantive agenda items. This will require meetings that on occasion will go beyond the normal hour of 6 p.m. We would ask the Secretariat, when it is necessary for meetings, to go beyond 6 p.m., to provide interpretation for such meetings, in so far as this is possible from the budgetary standpoint. Many delegations have problems following the discussion without interpretation.

I mention this because, at the 1993 session, meetings went on into the wee hours of the morning, unfortunately without interpretation.

The CHAIRMAN: I am certain that the representative of Mexico spoke for a large number of delegations that would wish for the type of Secretariat services to which he referred. Lack of interpretation services beyond a certain time has increasingly been a problem in the Disarmament Commission and other United Nations bodies. I am confident that our friend Mr. Lin will be in contact with his colleagues in the Secretariat and will make every effort to ensure that, as far as possible, such concerns will be met.

I call on the Secretary of the Commission.

Mr. LIN (Secretary of the Disarmament Commission): With reference to the statement of the representative of Mexico, let me say that, as members are aware, the Secretary-General has made it very clear that, in view of constrained financial resources, night meetings and weekend meetings are to be discouraged because they entail overtime pay.

But by draft resolution A/C.1/48/L.3/Rev.1 the General Assembly would

"Also [request] the Secretary-General to ensure full provision to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies of

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interpretation and translation facilities in the official languages, and to assign, as a matter of priority, all the necessary resources and services to this end".

(A/C.1/48/L.3/Rev.1, para. 15)

Based on that provision, I will try my best and will request the competent department to provide the necessary facilities.

Ms. MASON (Canada): The provision of appropriate interpretation services is an issue that my country too believes is very important. But my concern is that we should not mislead ourselves. We have just come through the First Committee where, even with a range of important issues to deal with, it was impossible to provide interpretation services after 6 p.m., with one very minor exception at the very, very end, where I think we went half an hour over.

Speaking as the potential Chairman of a Working Group, I consider that we have to know what we are dealing with from the outset. If in fact it is not going to be possible to have interpretation after a certain hour, we shall have to conduct ourselves accordingly and not find ourselves in a position where we have planned to have night meetings with certain services that are simply not going to be there.

I appreciate Mr. Lin's statement, and I have no doubt that he will argue vociferously for the needs of the Disarmament Commission, but in the light of what the Secretary-General himself has said I just wonder how realistic it is to envisage services after 6 p.m. - which means we all must work very hard before 6 p.m.

Mr. AKALOVSKI (United States of America): I want to support fully what the representative of Canada just said. We ought to be realistic. With all due respect to Mr. Lin and his ability to force the Secretariat to provide the necessary services,

(Mr. Akalovski, United States)

I frankly doubt that he will be very successful, given the fact that my own delegation, in another committee, would probably object to any overtime.

It was precisely because we recall the night meetings - "into the wee hours" as our Mexican colleague said - last spring that the United States had doubts about including a third substantive item this year. Now we have included one. We ought to be conscious of the limitations on the services we can have. If we go beyond 6 p.m. - hopefully not until 2 a.m. as was the case on at least one occasion last spring - we ought to be prepared to work without interpretation. We have to be realistic. I realize, of course, that many delegations find this very inconvenient, and we fully understand that but, as Ambassador Mason said, there is no use fooling ourselves into thinking that we will get services we cannot get.

The CHAIRMAN: May I take it that the Commission approves the tentative programme of work for its 1994 substantive session (A/CN.10/1994/CRP.1)?

It was so decided.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: Let me recall that two issues remain to be dealt with at this organizational session of the Disarmament Commission: the election of the officers for 1994 and the appointment of the chairmen of subsidiary bodies.

Let me reiterate my appeal to the relevant regional groups to accelerate the process of designating their candidates. The African Group is expected tomorrow to endorse candidates for the chairmanship and one of the vice-chairmanships of the Commission; the Eastern European Group and the Asian Group are expected very

(The Chairman)

soon to propose candidates for two vice-chairmanships; and we need from either the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States or the Group of Asian States the designation of a proposed chairman for Working Group III, on international arms transfers.

The Commission will meet next Tuesday, 14 December, at 10 a.m., the date, time and place to be confirmed in the Journal. It is to be hoped that the intervening time will be used to conclude the consultations on the outstanding issues.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.

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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 14 December 1993, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ARAUJO CASTRO (Brazil)

- Organizational matters
- Election of the Chairman and other officers
- Other business
- Closure of the session

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

The CHAIRMAN: At the meeting we held on 9 December the Disarmament Commission was able to take decisions on a number of organizational matters relating to our 1994 substantive session: first, the provisional agenda for that session; secondly, the establishment of subsidiary bodies, including three working groups; thirdly, the date and the duration of the 1994 substantive session; and, fourthly, the general programme of work for the 1994 substantive session.

The Commission decided to postpone the election of members of the Bureau for 1994, as well as the appointment of the Chairmen of its three Working Groups, because of ongoing consultations between and within the different regional groups. Accordingly, today we are ready to take up these items for action.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND OTHER OFFICERS

The CHAIRMAN: We will deal first with the election of the Chairman of the Commission for 1994.

In accordance with the established principle of rotation, the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission for its 1994 session is expected to come from the Group of African States.

Mr. KHALIL (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): It is an honour and a pleasure, Sir, to present the candidature of His Excellency Ambassador René Valéry Mongbe, Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations, to be your successor as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission.

Ambassador Mongbe received his bachelor's degree in political science in 1965 and went on to obtain a postgraduate diploma in 1968.

(Mr. Khalil, Egypt)

He began work in Benin in 1966, eventually reaching one of its highest positions, becoming a member of the High Council of State and Chairman of its Committee on Foreign Relations, Sovereignty and Defence. His long diplomatic experience includes service as Ambassador of his country since 1975, first to Zaire and Gabon, also being accredited to the Congo and Angola.

He was also the Director of the Office of International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1987, when he followed the work of the First Committee. He was appointed Permanent Representative of his country to the United Nations in 1990. During his period in New York, he has held many positions and chaired many committees. For a time he was a Vice-President of the General Assembly.

I am confident that Ambassador Mongbe's expertise and his deep knowledge of the mechanisms of the United Nations, as well as his general expertise in the field of disarmament, will contribute greatly to the success of the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission for 1994.

I would be remiss, Sir, if I failed to thank you for undertaking to direct the work of the Commission during the past session, and I wish you all success. I also wish the utmost success to Ambassador Mongbe, who is truly the best successor of the best predecessor.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement, in the course of which he presented the candidacy of Ambassador René Valéry Mongbe of Benin for the chairmanship of the Commission for 1994. I am pleased to inform members of the Commission that the Chairman of the Group of African States for the

(The Chairman)

month of December has also conveyed to me the formal endorsement by the Group of that candidacy.As all members are aware, Ambassador René Valéry Mongbe is a very well-known and respected career diplomat who has been serving with great distinction as the Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations since 1990. Prior to his present post, as mentioned by the representative of Egypt, he held a number of important posts. He served the Embassy of Benin in Paris, he was Ambassador to Zaire, the Congo and Angola, and he held a number of positions in his country, including those of Head of the Office of International Organizations, and Director-General of the Foreign Ministry.

Among the activities he has carried out as Permanent Representative of his country in New York, Ambassador Mongbe was Chairman of the Commission on Transnational Corporations and Vice-Chairman of the Economic Committee of the Economic and Social Council. Ambassador Mongbe is currently the Chairman of the Second Committee of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, a post which I am certain we all agree he has been filling with remarkable diplomatic skill, and with a special talent for consensus-building on difficult issues.

His delegation has had an active and constructive role in the work of the First Committee of the General Assembly, and in the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. I am very confident that under the leadership of Ambassador René Valéry Mongbe of Benin, the Disarmament Commission will be able to discharge its mandate in a most successful manner in 1994.

May I add, on a personal note, that it is particularly gratifying for me to witness the nomination to the chairmanship of the Commission of this distinguished diplomat from Benin, an

(The Chairman)

African country of the South Atlantic region with which Brazil has long enjoyed very close ties of friendship and cooperation.

If I hear no comments, I shall take it that it is the wish of the Commission that Ambassador René Valéry Mongbe of Benin be elected Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for 1994 by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I now declare Ambassador René Valéry Mongbe elected Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for the year 1994.

Mr. MONGBE (Benin) (interpretation from French): At the moment when it is the turn of Africa to preside over the proceedings of the Disarmament Commission, it is an honour for Benin to be charged with this responsibility for 1994. For me personally, it is a privilege to assume this responsibility on behalf of Benin. The delegation of Benin wishes to express its gratitude to all the members of the Commission for this mark of confidence.

The Disarmament Commission is an important element of the multilateral disarmament machinery; it provides a framework for the efforts of Member States in concentrating on negotiating agreements to control and limit the proliferation of armaments, in the interests of world peace.

Despite the optimism which greeted the end of the planetary rivalries that had led to the strengthening of the aggressive capacities of States to the point of over-armament, this long-sought peace is now extremely fragile, because it has been resisted by forces which threaten basic values. The continual promotion of collective security involving all States is necessary in order better to serve the peace for which we are brought together. The

(Mr. Mongbe, Benin)

work of the Disarmament Commission is carried out within this context.

The delegation of Benin wishes to pay tribute to you, Mr. Chairman, Ambassador of Brazil. As you yourself said, it is not merely geography which links Brazil and Benin; we are also bound by history. As you are well aware, names such as yours can be found in Benin, and words of your language, Portuguese, particularly the version spoken in Brazil, are part of our own national language. There are very important cultural affinities between our two countries, and it is thus only natural that I succeed you in this position. We are simply repeating what Benin and Brazil have always done, both geographically and historically.

I will be very happy to work with a team as competent as that of the secretariat which has helped us until now. I will be only too happy to work with the eminent members of this Commission, who have always helped you, Mr. Chairman, in the discharge of your honourable duties.

The task ahead of us in 1994 is a considerable one. In addition to the preliminary consideration of the new item on the agenda relating to international arms transfers, we must conclude our deliberations on two important points in particular: the process of nuclear disarmament within the framework of international security, with the purpose of eliminating nuclear weapons, and the role of science and technology in the framework of international security and disarmament.

We know that Benin can count on all members for the attainment of the goal we all share, while consistently applying the

(Mr. Mongbe, Benin)

recommendations on the rationalization of the Commission's work, which continue to prove to be effective.

Before concluding, I should like to thank the representative of Egypt, who, on behalf of the African Group, undertook the agreeable duty of nominating Benin for the chairmanship of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to thank the Ambassador of Benin, Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for 1994, for the extremely thoughtful and kind words he addressed to me and to the relationship between our two countries, which, as he recalled, has a long-standing strong historic and cultural foundation. My country has a great deal of interest in, and sympathy and friendship for, Benin, and it was most pleasant to hear him express similar sentiments. I congratulate him on his election and assure him of my cooperation and that of all delegations in the exercise of his challenging functions in 1994. We all look forward to working under his leadership in the coming year.

We shall now proceed to the election of the other members of the Bureau for 1994, namely, the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur. In this connection, I am pleased to announce that the Group of African States has endorsed the candidacy of Mauritius for one of the vice-chairmanships; that the Group of Asian States has endorsed the candidacies of Jordan and Pakistan for vice-chairmanships; and that the Group of Eastern European States has endorsed the candidacy of Poland for another of the vice-chairmanships, on the understanding that it may wish to nominate a second candidate for Vice-Chairman and that it may do so at any time prior to the 1994 substantive session. The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States has nominated Cuba for a vice-chairmanship, and, finally,

(The Chairman)

the Group of Western European and Other States has endorsed the candidacies of Austria and Sweden for vice-chairmanships.

If I hear no comment, I shall take it that the Disarmament Commission wishes to elect the representatives of Mauritius, Jordan, Pakistan, Poland, Cuba, Austria and Sweden as Vice-Chairmen of the Commission for 1994 by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now proceed to the election of the Rapporteur of the Commission for 1994. As previously announced, the candidate for that post should come from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. In this regard, I am pleased to announce that the Group has nominated Mr. José Manuel Ovalle of Chile to the post of Rapporteur for the Commission for 1994.

If I hear no comment, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect Mr. José Manuel Ovalle as Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission for 1994 by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to extend my congratulations to the seven Vice-Chairmen on their election and to Mr. Ovalle of Chile on his election as Rapporteur. I am sure that they will all make a very important contribution to the work of the Commission in 1994, working together with Ambassador Mongbe of Benin in carrying out the mandate which has been entrusted to the Commission by the General Assembly.

Mr. OVALLE (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, and the outgoing Bureau on the fine work you have done during 1993. I am certain that your example will inspire us in the coming year.

(Mr. Ovalle, Chile)

I should like also to convey my congratulations to the newly-elected Chairman, an eminent diplomat from Benin. I am sure that he will lead our work with great skill next year, thus meeting the expectations of the international community on so delicate and important a matter as disarmament.

Finally, I wish to thank the Latin American and Caribbean Group for the honour it has bestowed on me. As an expression of gratitude for the trust it has placed in me, I commit myself to work with all my ability in the pursuit of our goals.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now proceed to the appointment of the Chairmen of subsidiary bodies for the 1994 session.

As I mentioned earlier, at its last meeting the Commission decided to renew and establish the mandates of the subsidiary bodies for the 1994 substantive session. We shall now proceed formally to appoint the Chairman of each of the three Working Groups.

I wish to draw the attention of the members of the Commission to paragraph 4, sub-paragraph 1, of the adopted document entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission" which reads inter alia:

> "The allocation of the agenda items to the four subsidiary bodies and the appointment of chairmen for these subsidiary bodies should be decided at the organizational session of the Commission, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution." (A/CN.10/137)

I am pleased to inform the Commission that as a result of consultations that were held between and within the regional groups, the arrangements that are proposed for the Commission's

(The Chairman)

approval for the chairmanship of the three working groups for 1994 are as follows.

As previously agreed at the 1993 session, Ambassador Victor Batiouk of Ukraine will continue to chair Working Group I on the item entitled "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons".

As I announced at our last meeting, following consultations in the Group of Western European and Other States, the name of Ambassador Peggy Mason of Canada has been presented for the chairmanship of Working Group II on the item entitled "The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields".

Finally, following consultations between the Latin American and Caribbean Group and the Asian Group, Ambassador Luis Fernando Jaramillo, Permanent Representative of Colombia, has been proposed by both Groups to chair Working Group III on the item entitled "International arms transfers, with particular reference to resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991".

If I hear no comment, may I take it that the Commission wishes to appoint these three Chairmen by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to extend my very warmest congratulations to Ambassador Victor Batiouk, Ambassador Peggy Mason and Ambassador Luis Fernando Jaramillo on their appointment as Chairmen of the three Working Groups. I am sure that with the Working Groups under the able leadership of these distinguished diplomats the Commission will be able to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

OTHER BUSINESS

The CHAIRMAN: Let me refer to a minor technical point that I thought it would be useful to bring to the attention of members. Members will recall that the First Committee adopted its draft resolution A/C.1/48/L.3/Rev.1, on the report of the Disarmament Commission, under agenda item 73 (a). Paragraph 11 of that draft resolution recommends that the Disarmament Commission, at its 1993 organizational session, adopt the items it mentions for consideration and conclusion, and paragraph 12 recommends that the Disarmament Commission, at its 1993 organizational session, include a new item on the agenda.

It has been pointed out to me that, since the draft resolution has not yet been adopted in plenary meeting, it might be advisable to introduce certain drafting changes in the text. Obviously, the forum for this would not be the Disarmament Commission; if members feel such changes would be useful, they could possibly be introduced through the Rapporteur of the First Committee when the Committee's reports are presented for consideration in plenary meeting, which I understand will be in the afternoon of Thursday, 16 December.

One possibility is simply to change the lead word from "recommends" to "notes" in paragraphs 11 and 12, as the Disarmament

(The Chairman)

Commission has already taken these decisions. The revised paragraph 11 could begin

"Notes that the Disarmament Commission, at its 1993 organizational session, adopted the following items ...".

And the revised paragraph 12 could begin

"Notes that the Disarmament Commission decided to include in the agenda ...".

If members are in agreement, I could perhaps write a letter to the Rapporteur of the First Committee, mentioning that this point was raised today and suggesting that it might be appropriate to introduce oral revisions when the relevant report is considered by the General Assembly at next Thursday's plenary meeting. Does the Commission agree that I should write such a letter?

It was so decided.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: Let me conclude by thanking all members for all their cooperation throughout the year as we strove to fulfil our challenging mandate. I have already had the opportunity to present what in my view was a positive assessment of the substantive work we did and of the very strong ground we prepared for the future work of the Commission.

In 1994 the Commission will be expected to conclude its work on two items: the item on nuclear disarmament and the item on science and technology. It will also begin consideration of the item on international arms transfers. That is quite a work-load, but I am very confident that under the leadership of Ambassador Mongbe of Benin and with the assistance of all the other members of the Bureau - and, in particular, with the cooperation and very able guidance of the Chairmen of the three Working

(The Chairman)

Groups - the Commission will be able to carry it out, always counting on the support of the secretariat and the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, which has always proved to be extremely capable and competent in the support it provides to the Commission.

I thank all members for the kindness they have shown me throughout the year as I exercised my functions as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission.

I declare closed the 1993 organizational session of the Disarmament Commission.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.